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6 September 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Progress Report on the Product Improvement Program

1. You will recall that when we were talking the other day, I mentioned I would send in to you a progress report on the general field of product improvement which was being prepared by [redacted] [redacted] This is attached. It is, as you can see, a fairly complete inventory of the various activities in this field which have been undertaken since the charter meeting of the NSCIC and the subsequent establishment of its Working Group. While the report is not overly long, it does contain more detail than you may wish to address and I have therefore used red ink to point up what seem to be the more significant bits.

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2. I think the thing to keep in mind as you peruse this is the fact that the guidelines of the Working Group did not go beyond the very general language of the 5 November directive. We have thus been feeling our way and almost all that has been undertaken has been with the objective of pinpointing areas in the intelligence production process, in the broadest sense, which need improvement. If we are successful in this, even to a limited degree, we should then be in a position so to report to the NSCIC, in the expectation that that body would issue instructions that could form the nucleus for a positive improvement program. I would certainly hope and expect that we would render the first of such reports to the NSCIC this fall, when we should have completed some of the several studies undertaken on the intelligence process in crisis situations.

3. As is always the case when programs like this are undertaken, they prove time-consuming and are demanding of manpower. Inevitably the production areas are the ones hit hardest and production managers become restive. When this, as I mentioned to you the other day, is combined with the innate conservatism of these managers,

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you have a problem in the offing somewhat larger than a man's hand. So far, I think, we have been able to contain this, perhaps because we have been exploring symptoms rather than inflicting remedies. The problem really boils down to the fact that the veterans in the production business have seen a lot of water pass under the bridge over the years and tend to see nothing very new in what is being surfaced now. Moreover, they feel that most of the problems are innate to our business and that nothing much will change the situation. What we must do, I think, over the long haul, is to try to identify areas where the situation just isn't good enough and where too good a case for improvement can be made to permit production managers to be balky in principle. I think it can be done but we will have to be fairly clever about it. I am certainly not going to run to you for help unless I think we are getting into unnecessary trouble.

4. At the risk of oversimplification, I would say that the areas involved are consumer feedback and the quality of substantive analysis. I would guess that we can make some progress in the former field, but have no illusions about reaching any millennium; on the other hand I do believe the modern world is changing the environment of the analyst and that we can probably do more to adapt him to it. I do not mean to imply by this that our production people are oblivious to these matters, of course they are not; but I would hope we can at some stage embark on a more organized program, which should be of service to all elements of the community concerned.

(Signed) Bronson Tweedy

Bronson Tweedy  
D/DCI/IC

Attachment

IC:BT:dm

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